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SUBJECT: AFM HE YAFEI DISCUSSES SIX-PARTY TALKS, TIBET,
REGIONAL SECURITY WITH SENATE STAFFDEL

Classified By: Deputy Political Section Chief Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4
(b/d)

Summary

1. (C) Senate Staffel members urged Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei to help convince DPRK leaders that if they fulfill their obligations under the Six-Party Talks framework, the United States stands ready to do the same. The DPRK must disclose information on its uranium enrichment program and "troubling" nuclear proliferation activity, they stressed, adding that Phase Three will not receive funding from Congress without confidence in the DRPK's intentions. AFM He suggested that the DPRK sees "no penalty for prolonging the situation." Senate Foreign Relations Committee Professional Staff Member Frank Januzzi warned that progress will be more difficult after the U.S. presidential election because of domestic political considerations, and emphasized that President Bush will not compromise his principles on nuclear proliferation. AFM He said there are "clear indications" that the Dalai Lama is behind riots in Tibet and that Washington should "exercise restraint in public statements on the matter." AFM He called Taiwan the "number one" threat to security in Asia, and said China is willing to "set back our economy twenty years" to see that Taiwan never separates from China. The "airline disaster" averted March 7 on a Southern Airlines flight from Urumqi to Beijing was intended to be a "terrorist attack," AFM He said.
End Summary.

AFM He on Six-Party Talks: "Time is Running Out"

2. (C) A Congressional Staff Delegation led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Professional Staff Member Frank Januzzi and Senate Armed Services Committee Professional Staff Members Evelyn Farkas and Dana White discussed the Six-Party Talks, Tibetan unrest, prospects for Korean reunification and a Northeast Asia security mechanism, Taiwan and the March 7 alleged Southern Airlines terrorist incident with AFM He Yafei on March 17. Staffdel members urged AFM He to help instill confidence in the DPRK that if they fulfill their obligations under the Six-Party Talks framework, the United States stands ready to do the same. Januzzi said it is important that the DPRK disclose information on its uranium enrichment program and "troubling" nuclear proliferation activity, about which Congress has deep concern. Januzzi added that Congress will not fund "Phase Three" of the Six-Party Talks process without confidence in the DRPK's intentions.

3. (C) AFM He said that, according to a briefing he received on the March 13 talks in Geneva between A/S Hill and VFM Kim Kye-Gwan, a solution to the current impasse in the Six-Party Talks is "very close" and is only a question of wording. AFM He asserted that China will do "almost anything" to reach

a solution, but confided in Staffdel members that "time is running out" for the United States because of the upcoming U.S. presidential elections. He noted that the DPRK does not like China "carrying messages" on behalf of the United States because it implies that the United States does not trust North Korea. Farkus made it clear that the Staffdel would deliver the same messages directly to their North Korean counterparts in Pyongyang during the next leg of their trip.

14. (C) AFM He suggested that the ball is in the United States' court in the Six-Party Talks, pointing out that, in the eyes of the DPRK, there is "no penalty for prolonging the situation." MFA Korean Affairs Counselor Ma Mingqiang stated that the DPRK is "ready to strike a deal" with the administration. However, he said, because North Korea believes President Bush is "desperate" for success in order to secure his "political legacy," it is waiting for a better bargain. Januzzi told AFM He that, according to conversations with U.S. scholars like Michael Green and Victor Cha who have spent many hours discussing this issue with the President, President Bush will not compromise his principles on nuclear proliferation and will have no regrets if that means walking away from a deal with the DPRK. Januzzi stated that the longer it takes to solve this problem, the harder it will be to make progress, and he described how political considerations and factors would "almost certainly" prevent a Democratic president from offering a better deal to the North Koreans than they now have under the current Six-Party Talks framework, particularly if the next president decides to draw down the U.S. presence in Iraq

Tibet: China Asks for Washington to Show "Restraint"

BEIJING 00001142 002 OF 002

15. (C) AFM He stated that "the situation in Tibet is out of control" and declared that no country, including the United States, would tolerate such riots. "Innocent policemen" were among the people who have been killed, AFM He said, adding that China has the responsibility to restore order. There are "clear indications" that the Dalai Lama is behind the riots, AFM He said. He hoped that "Washington will exercise restraint in public statements on the matter." Januzzi expressed Congress's great concern over the unrest in Tibet and its hope for the restoration of peace and stability in Tibet and for a genuine reconciliation between China and the Dalai Lama.

Korean Reunification, Northeast Security Mechanism

16. (C) Januzzi and Farkus both emphasized that it is time for the United States and China to begin a dialogue on China's interests in a reunified Korea so as to avoid any unfortunate "misalignment" on the issue. Speaking "personally," AFM He said that the Foreign Ministry is beginning to discuss this topic. Referring to President Hu Jintao's political report to the 17th Party Congress, AFM He stressed the importance for China that countries along its border be open, democratic and stable, and noted that current discussions with Burma on such issues was "unthinkable ten years ago." He said he was disappointed to hear from a "South Korean counterpart" that the United States is "cold" toward China's proposed trilateral dialogue between the United States, China and Japan because of American fears that China is trying to "dominate the region." He declared that it is not in China's interests to exclude the United States from the region and it will not do so. Januzzi assured AFM He that the United States will not seek a security mechanism that excludes China, noting as evidence the many instances of U.S. efforts to reach out to China.

Taiwan: China "Will Do Anything"

17. (C) AFM He called Taiwan the "number one" threat to security in Asia and stated that China is willing to "set back our economy twenty years" to see that Taiwan never separates from China. Though China believes in peaceful reunification, AFM He added, China will "do anything" to prevent Taiwan independence.

March 7 "Terrorist" Incident

18. (C) AFM He brought up the March 7 averted "airline disaster" on a Southern Airlines flight from Urumqi to Beijing as an example of the terrorism threats that China now increasingly faces. He maintained that the event was intended to be a "terrorist attack" and that it was "much more complicated" than a "simple act of sabotage committed by a young woman."

19. (U) The Staffdel did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.
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